

**FOCUS CONSTRUCTION**

## I-84 viaduct remake weighs heavily on businesses, motorists, DOT

By John Stearns

jstearns@HartfordBusiness.com

**T**hink of the construction project to replace the I-84 viaduct through downtown Hartford this way: You can peel the Band-Aid off slowly, or rip it off as quickly as possible.

Lingering discomfort vs. short jolt of pain.

Richard Armstrong, principal engineer at the state Department of Transportation, heard someone use that Band-Aid analogy and shared it to visualize the kind of construction options DOT and the community will have to consider before

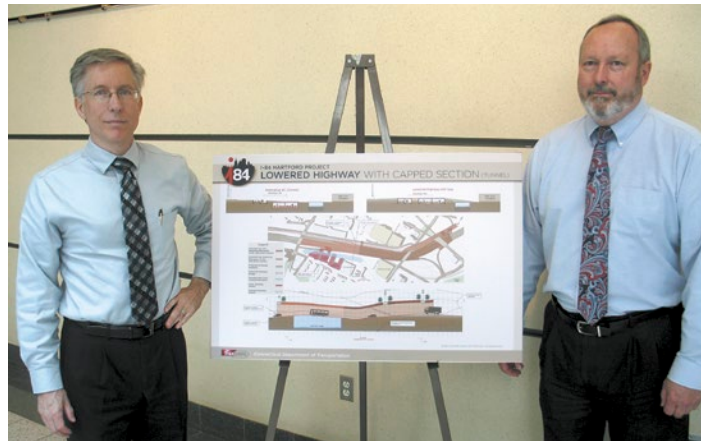
the expected viaduct replacement project begins around 2021.

It's too early to talk specifics about construction since there's no decision yet on the new design, although there's apparent consensus on a combination of ground-level and "capped" freeway.

What is certain, however, is that the construction project will be complicated for engineers and builders and painful for motorists and some businesses — it's a matter of how painful, slow peel or quick pull.

Building an at-grade/capped

*Continued on page 8*



Richard Armstrong, principal engineer at the state Department of Transportation (left), and Dave Stahnke, engineer, principal and senior vice president at TranSystems, show a drawing of the I-84 project area through downtown Hartford.



### Beating the Odds

Serial entrepreneur Daniel Navarro is the new owner/partner of the Sutra Fusion Bar in Hartford, near the intersection of Capitol Avenue and Main Street, a location that hasn't been kind to restaurants in the past. **PG. 3**

### Deal Watch

One of East Hartford's prime office towers has reached nearly full occupancy thanks to a series of recent lease signings/renewals. **PG. 14**

### Independent Living



Carl Johnson, the former managing partner of one of Connecticut's largest accounting and consulting firms, is hanging his own shingle. Find out why he's decided to start his own company. **PG. 5**

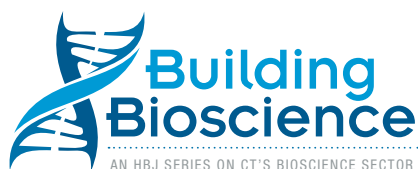
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## Defeating the Superbug

Melinta Therapeutics takes aim at deadly drug-resistant bacteria

Melinta Therapeutics senior research scientist Dr. Somenath Chowdhury works in the company's New Haven lab, which is developing several antibiotics to treat bacterial infections.



**H**artford Business Journal's year-long series on Connecticut's bioscience industry returns this week with a look at one of the state's most promising companies, New Haven-based Melinta Therapeutics. Over the next six weeks, HBJ will profile

a half-dozen bioscience startups as well as more established companies to reflect the breadth and diversity of the state's fledgling bioscience sector.

We'll also take a look at some of the state's top bioscience execs and researchers. **PG. 12**

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# Serial entrepreneur eyes next challenge in Hartford's restaurant scene

By Stan Simpson

There is arguably no more desirable location in a capital city than the corner of Capitol Avenue and Main Street.

Truth be told, for restaurateurs in Hartford, that signature site has been problematic. Parking challenges, management, marketing and neighbor-relations issues have led to a series of restaurants closing there.

Daniel Navarro is next in line to give the spot a shot. He is the new owner/partner of the Sutra Fusion Bar — formerly Royal Masala, an Indian restaurant.

Navarro, 35, sees possibilities where others may see problems. He is of Peruvian and Puerto Rican descent and envisions Sutra offering an infusion of Latin American and Asian cuisine, while adding a distinctive flair downtown. An official re-launch is planned for August.

"Nothing is impossible to me," he said, sitting at a back table. "I'm trying to manage my time efficiently. It's a very delicate time in the business. We want to get things started on the right foot, where we're presenting things to our expectations and standards. And that's why I have to be so hands-on. We've got to make decisions that will allow us to open with a bang."

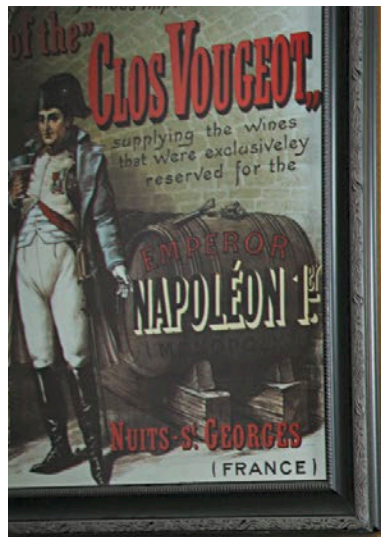
Before its grand opening, Sutra — an ancient Indian term meaning "discourse" — will likely close for a few weeks for renovations. A new air conditioning compressor has to be purchased and repairs made to the freezer and other equipment.

Navarro moved to Connecticut in 2008. His desire to step into the restaurant business can be traced to his days in Boston, where he was born and raised by a single mother with his older brother. There, Navarro ran with a fast, and sometimes unsavory crowd while operating both a car customization business and a marketing firm that specialized in branding campaigns and websites for restaurants and nightclubs.

Navarro is a serial entrepreneur and a man with eclectic interests. A former graffiti



Stan Simpson



Daniel Navarro's Sutra Fusion Bar in Hartford will offer a mix of Latin American and Asian cuisine.

artist, he enjoyed as a child reading Edgar Allan Poe, Charles Dickens and other literary classics. With artistic peers, he traveled the world creating murals in such places as Spain, Italy, France, Peru and South America.

Intrigued by how technology can intersect with the financial services industry, he has been involved in the credit card processing business. Navarro is also CEO of United Cash and Capital, an alternative business lender that serves small and medium-sized enterprises.

His background in restaurant marketing, sales, building websites, financial services and the arts will, Navarro believes, bring a fresh approach to restaurant management. Of the seven employees, two are chefs.

His business partner recently became ill,

so in recent weeks Navarro, who is single, has found himself "micro-managing" the operation, a time-consuming practice he believes will subside once things get rolling.

"With my experience doing a lot of marketing for restaurants and nightclubs, I've always liked the creative aspect of presenting drinks, food and combining that with the relationships that are built around that kind of atmosphere," Navarro said. "I love people. I love creativity. And I think food identifies a lot with culture and what is happening in the world. That's something I'm passionate about."

Entrees, ranging from \$15 and up, will include Lomo Salado (sautéed beef, onions and tomatoes), Cajun salmon, paella and French-cut chicken breast. Appetizers, \$3 and up, will

include Arancini — meat and cheese filled rice balls, Korean-style calamari and empanadas.

Navarro's journey to entrepreneurship hasn't been easy; there have been some hard lessons that matured him.

In his early 20s in Boston, while servicing customized-car clients and night club connections, Navarro admits that he too got caught up in the high life. There was a sense of urgency to financially help his mom, who was working multiple jobs. In 2004, at 23, Navarro was arrested and served four years in a Boston prison for drug-selling charges.

"I drifted into influences that weren't positive," he says now. "By losing my freedom, it

Continued

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## ► Faces of Business: Daniel Navarro

gave me the opportunity to understand my principles and my ethics. Everything that I was doing that led to that situation could have been prevented as a result of me understanding what was truly my nature, which is to be a man of honor. I think God put me through that and allowed me to survive that journey to make me the better man I am today.”

Across the street, also on Capitol Avenue and Main Street, the Republic Restaurant is in the midst of renovations for its grand opening. Soon, there'll be two new restaurants on a corner that has not been kind to eateries.

Let the discourse begin. ■

*Stan Simpson is the principal of Stan Simpson Enterprises LLC, a strategic communications consulting firm. He is also host of "The Stan Simpson Show," which airs Saturday, 5:30 a.m., on Fox CT or [www.fox61.com/stan](http://www.fox61.com/stan).*



Navarro sits inside his new Hartford restaurant on Capitol Avenue in Hartford.

PHOTO | STEVE LASCHNER

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# BlumShapiro ex-partner Johnson's new groove

The kids are out of college. In his rear-view mirror is a solid, 32 1/2-year career as a certified public accountant who for nearly half that period led one of New England's largest — if not the biggest — independent accounting firm/business consultancies.

That, plus hitting age 56, Carl R. Johnson says made it the right time in June to retire as a partner at BlumShapiro LLC of West Hartford and hang out his own shingle.

"I've always said I wanted to do something different," said Johnson, who spent 13 of his last 14 years as BlumShapiro's managing partner, a nearly round-the-clock job. "I figured this was a good time to do something new."

Working without staff from his Farmington



Carl R. Johnson

home and a satellite office at a dwelling on Cape Cod, Mass., Johnson says his CRJ Consulting LLC already has landed 10 clients, mostly accounting firms spread among Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Rhode Island. With them, he says he's doing pretty much what he did his last years at BlumShapiro — helping with business development and strategic planning.

A Bristol native, Johnson graduated from Pennsylvania's Susquehanna University and returned to Connecticut, working two years at the utility now known as Ever-source while pursuing his CPA license. In 1984, he joined BlumShapiro, which then had one office and 40 workers.

By 1995, Johnson was a partner. In 2002, he was voted managing partner, overseeing 100 workers. Today, through acquisitions and expansion, BlumShapiro has more than 400 staffers in a half dozen New England offices.

— Gregory Seay

# Southington's Holiday Inn Express note in arrears

A \$4.9 million, 10-year mortgage secured with Southington's Holiday Inn Express hotel has landed in default, according to a commercial loan tracker.

Trepp LLC of New York City says in its latest report that IRNM Fee Southington LLC, the Waterford owner of the 122-room hotel at 120 Laning St., in the shadow of ESPN headquarters, was to make the last of its interest-only payments in July before an August balloon payment to satisfy the outstanding \$4.4 million loan balance.

The loan, which was a refinanced mortgage originated through former Wachovia Bank and serviced by Wachovia's successor, Wells Fargo Bank, has been in default since June, according to Trepp's data. The note bears a 6.34 percent interest rate.

Built in 1987, the 36,138-square-foot hotel underwent a renovation in 2001.

When it was last appraised in 2006, the property was valued at \$9.4 million, or \$77,049 per room, giving a loan-to-value



Holiday Inn Express Southington, 120 Laning St., Southington.

ratio of 51.7 percent. Average daily occupancy for the property through the first three months of 2016 was 50 percent vs. average annual daily occupancy of 65 percent since 2011, Trepp loan data shows.

According to Trepp, master servicer LNR Partners Inc.'s commentary about the loan indicates that the hotel is for sale. LNR could not be reached for comment.

— Gregory Seay

# CT companies raise \$89.1M in 2Q

Connecticut venture capital activity ticked up in the second quarter, but investment so far this year lags well behind 2015.

Venture capitalists injected \$89.1 million in Connecticut companies during the second quarter of 2016, down from \$117.5 million in the year-ago period.

Overall, 20 Connecticut companies received funding during the April to June period, compared to 16 a year earlier, according to the latest MoneyTree report, a joint effort of PricewaterhouseCoopers and the National Venture Capital Association (NVCA), using data from Thomson Reuters.

Nationally, venture capitalists invested \$15.3 billion in 961 deals in the second quarter. That investment total was up 20 percent

from a year earlier, while deal count was down 5 percent.

Through the first two quarters of 2016, total venture capital funding is down 44 percent in Connecticut, while there have been three fewer deals.

South Windsor 3D-printing manufacturer Oxford Performance Materials received the largest funding during the second quarter, raking in \$25.9 million.

Other Greater Hartford companies to raise money included: Hartford's Amp Electrical Distribution Services (\$6.6 million), Rocky Hill's Payveris (\$4 million), and Middletown's Umbie Health Corp. (\$2.6 million).

— Greg Bordonaro

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## BY THE NUMBERS

5%

The planned state Department of Transportation fare increase for commuters taking the New Haven rail line, which will raise nearly \$6 million to cover budget shortfalls.

468

The number of new housing permits issued by 104 Connecticut cities and towns in June, down nearly 8 percent from a year earlier.

\$159,000

The median asking price for a Greater Hartford company listed for sale in the second quarter, according to BizBuySell.com.

0.9%

Connecticut's gross domestic product growth rate in the first quarter of 2016, below the nation's 1.2 percent growth rate, according to the Bureau of Economic Analysis.

## TOP 5 MOST READ

on HartfordBusiness.com

- Labor Dept. issues stop work order at 18 grocery stores
- UConn Health disputes it improperly ended pediatric services
- Minnesota co. consider Windsor for plant that would bring 70 jobs
- Treasurer's office said it could have saved \$554M
- UConn using some of its own funds to upgrade infrastructure

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The price to ride the train out of New Haven is going up.

## TOP STORY

## DOT raising fares, cutting construction to balance budget

To offset a \$37 million budget reduction, the state Department of Transportation has announced fare hikes and reductions to planned rail and bridge improvements.

Road and bridge program reductions total \$19 million and public transportation program reductions total \$18 million.

The highway and bridge reductions include decreasing maintenance work related to items such as tree cutting, joint and crack sealing and drainage work. Additional plan savings include delays in hiring personnel and anticipated fuel savings.

Effective Dec. 1, DOT is also planning to increase fares by 5 percent on the New Haven commuter rail line, including the New Canaan, Danbury and Waterbury branches, and Shore Line East, which the agency said would generate about \$5.9 million in new revenue. On the New Haven Line, the increase would be combined with a 1 percent previously scheduled fare increase.

## HEALTH CARE

## CT gets failing grade for healthcare price transparency

Most states, including Connecticut, could do more to give consumers the price information they need for making educated healthcare choices, according to an annual report card released by two independent health policy organizations.

The 2016 Report Card on State Price Transparency Laws developed by the Newtown-based Health Care Incentives Improvement Institute (HCII) and California-based Catalyst for Payment Reform (CPR), gave 43 states an "F" for failing to meet even minimum standards.

Connecticut was among states getting an "F." To improve its grade, the report card suggested the state should take the data from its established all-payer claims database and post it on a publicly accessible website.

Only three states — New Hampshire, Colorado, and Maine — received an "A" for providing detailed pricing on a variety of procedures through easy-to-use public websites, backed by rich data sources.

## UConn Health disputes it improperly ended pediatric services

The University of Connecticut Health Center denies it is ceasing pediatric services at two locations improperly. Instead, it said, it is transferring operations to the Connecticut Children's Medical Center, the state's only pediatric hospital, with no loss in services.

Sen. Minority Leader Len Fasano (R-North Haven) said in a statement last week that the Office of Health Care Access (OHCA) is opening an inquiry into UConn Health's plan to stop all clinical pediatric services at their East Hartford and West Hartford locations. UConn Health did not notify the Office of Health Care Access of their plan to cease pediatric services by Oct. 1, 2016, Fasano said.

A UConn Health spokesperson said Connecticut Children's has decided to operate pediatric clinics in the same sites of East Hartford and West Hartford with no expected change in access to pediatric care. A UConn Health statement said the decision was financially driven with expected annual savings of \$700,000.

Fasano said the review process is still required to ensure that any proposed change in service is fully vetted.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT &amp; CONSTRUCTION

## Minnesota firm considering Windsor for plant that would bring 70 jobs

A Minnesota company is considering locating a new \$25 million, 82,000-square-foot manufacturing plant on Marshall Phelps Road in Windsor by next summer, and hiring at least 70 local workers.

Windsor's Economic Development Committee recently approved the company's request for a tax break, which still must be approved by the Town Council and the Planning and Zoning Commission.

If the project goes forward, Fabcon Precast, a national maker of industrial and commercial concrete wall panels, would contribute nearly \$1 million to the town over four years.

The only hitch is that the town has competition: New Britain and a city in Massachusetts.

Ryan Ksiazek, Fabcon corporate project manager, said the initial site list included Southington, Killingly, and Massachusetts municipalities Springfield, East Longmeadow, Orange, Westfield and Wilbraham.

Fabcon's nationwide customer base includes "the Amazons, Wal-Marts, and Sam's Clubs," Ksiazek said.

— Harlan Levy, Journal Inquirer

## PTI Industries acquired by private equity firm holding company

Enfield based PTI Industries has been acquired by a holding company backed by a Chicago private equity firm.

Industrial Service Solutions (ISS), which is a portfolio company of the \$2.4 billion private equity firm the Edgewater Funds, bought PTI Industries for an undisclosed sum. A PTI spokeswoman said there have been no layoffs at the company that employs 120 people. PTI President Harley Dulude Jr. was also retained.

PTI was founded in 1983 to provide non-destructive testing services to machine shops serving the aerospace and medical industries.

## ECONOMY &amp; LABOR

## CT GDP grows slower than national average

Connecticut's gross domestic product grew by 0.9 percent in the first quarter of 2016, according to the Bureau of Economic Analysis.

That lags behind both national GDP growth of 1.2 percent and New England's 1.5 percent growth for the quarter.

Connecticut was last in New England for GDP growth for the three months. BEA said Connecticut's overall GDP for the first quarter was \$262.2 billion, second only in New England to Massachusetts, which has a GDP of \$485.4 billion.

Information technology, health care and social assistance, real estate and rental and leasing, as well as finance and insurance, were the three largest growth segments for the quarter. The construction, utilities and government sectors saw the biggest declines.

## Asking price for Greater Hartford small biz drops

A new survey shows small business transactions in the first half of 2016 are up slightly from last year but asking prices were down in Greater Hartford.

The survey from BizBuySell.com was based on data from 135 Hartford-area businesses listed in the second quarter of 2016 on the site. According to the report, if you want to buy a business in Hartford, the median asking price at the beginning of 2016 was \$159,000. Owners asked for, on average, an annual revenue multiple of 0.62 and a cash flow multiple of 2.36.

Businesses listed for sale in Hartford in the second quarter of 2016 had median revenue of \$400,000, down from \$401,500 at this same time last year in first quarter of 2015.

## LEGAL

## Labor dept. issues stop work orders at 18 grocery stores

The state Labor Department last week issued stop work orders at 18 Shop-Rite, Stop and Shop and Whole Foods locations in Connecticut after receiving wage complaints from several workers employed by the cleaning contractors for those stores.

Employees from the labor department's Wage and Workplace Standards Division visited the grocery stores throughout the state and determined that the cleaning contractors did not have Connecticut workers' compensation coverage or unemployment coverage.

The contractors were also cited for incorrectly treating their employees as independent contractors. A total of 23 employees were providing cleaning services at the stores, which were located throughout the region including in West Hartford, Glastonbury, Manchester, Rocky Hill, Simsbury, South Windsor and East Hartford.



## REAL ESTATE



A home under construction in a Southington housing development.

### CT's June housing permits slow

Connecticut construction of new single- and multi-family dwellings slowed in June from a year earlier, fresh housing-permit data shows.

Last month, 104 cities and towns responding to a monthly U.S. Census Bureau survey said they issued a combined 468 housing permits vs. 508 granted in June 2015, the state Department of

Economic and Community Development said.

Through the first six months of this year, those communities issued 2,205 vs. 2,247 permits in the first half of 2015, DECD said.

Single-family houses and apartments/condominiums with five or more living units continue to dominate the state's new residential construction landscape, data shows.

### Survey: CT's June home sales up, prices flat

Connecticut's statewide sales of single-family houses increased in June but prices were relatively flat, a fresh survey says.

There were 3,506 houses sold across the state last month vs. 3,368 units sold the same month a year ago, Boston's The Warren Group, publisher of The Commercial Record, said.

Warren Group's survey echoes an earlier tally from the Connecticut Association of Realtors showing a 7.4 percent rise in statewide house sales last month vs. a year earlier. Median sale price was unchanged.

Through the first six months of this year, house sales statewide grew 17.8 percent to 14,419 transactions vs. 12,240 in the first half of 2015, The Warren Group said.

The median price of a single-family home rose 1.5 percent in June to \$269,000 vs. \$264,900 a year ago. Year-to-date, prices have fallen 1.2 percent to \$242,000 compared with \$245,000 during the same time a year ago.

## INSURANCE

### The Hartford to sell U.K. P&C run-off subsidiaries

Property and casualty insurer The Hartford said it will sell its run-off subsidiaries by the end of the year to Catalina Holdings UK Limited.

Run-off subsidiaries, or closeout insurance, are used to protect a firm from outstanding liabilities after a merger, acquisition or company closing.

The subsidiaries, worth just over \$1 billion in assets, are Downlands Liability Management Limited and Hartford Financial Products International Limited.

The deal, which is expected to close in the fourth quarter, is not expected to result in a material gain or loss for The Hartford.

## WHAT'S AHEAD:

- 8/8 Focus: **Startups**
- The List: **Wealth/Money Managers**
- Nonprofit Profile: **Connecticut Science Center**

## CALENDAR

TUESDAY, AUG. 30

### Business Networking Event



Nicole Cline

APICS Hartford County Chapter, in partnership with the Connecticut Business & Industry Association (CIBIA), the American Society for Quality, and the Institute of Management Accountants, is hosting an informal business networking event on Tuesday, Aug. 30 at the Thomas Hooker Brewery in Bloomfield.

The event, which runs from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. will feature a brief presentation and discussion with **Nicole Cline**, CIBIA's public outreach specialist, who will lead an interactive dialogue on the "Adopt a Legislator Program."

The event will provide an opportunity to meet up with members of multiple Connecticut business organizations that regularly offer events important to personal and company growth and success. It's also a chance to learn how to connect with legislators and why it's important to get involved in the legislative process — even if you're not a political person.

Cost to attend is \$25 for members, \$30-\$35 for nonmembers.

For more information or to register go to: <http://apics-hartford.org/>.

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from page 1

# Ground-level, capped freeway top choice

highway conventionally — lane reductions and restrictions, temporary ramps and bridges, trying to keep traffic moving as close to normal as possible (think I-84 Waterbury work today) — could take four to seven years, Armstrong said. An accelerated plan using more disruptive construction processes (think I-84 Southington bridge replacement two years ago when the highway was a closed for three days and pre-built bridges dropped in place), could perhaps cut that time in half. While shutting down I-84 at times may not be feasible in Hartford, other accelerated methods could be considered.

“How you build it is probably more complicated than what you build in the final configuration,” Armstrong said. “So it certainly would be several years, and of course we want to explore ... , ‘What if we were more aggressive with construction, cause greater impacts, but really reduce the time? ... Because five or six years of impacts, that’s not a short-term impact.”

Knoxville, Tenn., did a similarly complicated freeway construction project and closed Interstate 40 for about 14 months after weighing safety (for workers, of course, but also motorists who are easily distracted by construction equipment and people, have to navigate tight lanes, cones, temporary signage, etc.) and economic impacts of longer versus shorter construction, said Dave Stahnke, engineer, principal and senior vice president at Meriden-based TranSystems, the program manager overseeing all phases of the project for Connecticut DOT. Knoxville also has more convenient bypasses onto other highway systems for traffic, he said.

“One of the things they keyed on is the safety,” Stahnke said.

While it’s too early to talk construction methods before a design has even been selected, Oz Griebel, president and CEO of the MetroHartford Alliance, is confident DOT will do the right thing by the community based on its actions so far.

“This has been, to date ... an extremely well-managed and highly participatory effort that DOT has led,” Griebel said of meetings with businesses and others that will be affected. “This engagement of the public, particularly the private-sector employers as the project’s construction schedule starts, is going to be even more critical so that people have confidence that all the options from a construction standpoint have been evaluated and people’s opinions and thoughts are in there, (and) that we begin to develop options for getting in and out of the city.”

Those could include discounts on CTfastrak for people going in and out of the city at rush hour, adding more buses on other routes to encourage bus use and more offsite work options for downtown workers, he said.

“There’s no question that a construction project of this magnitude, once the funding sources are identified and once the project actually moves into construction phase, that it’s got significant impact on everybody’s lives,” Griebel said.

Griebel said his biggest concern now is making sure the massive construction project doesn’t deter employers from expanding in or moving to the Capital City.

## Complex construction

Before any construction begins, the federal government has to sign off on whatever’s decided — whether doing nothing (which really means spending tens of millions of dollars to maintain the aging, overcapacity,



An aerial view of the two-mile long I-84 Hartford viaduct, which divides the Capital City and guides more than 175,000 vehicles per day.

poorly designed viaduct), burying I-84 in a tunnel or doing the combination at-grade/cap concept at a fifth of the cost of a tunnel. In addition, the Feds must also ensure state funding is in place to complete it.

So what is this capping concept?

After dropping the highway to ground level or slightly below, it means covering it with a cap over which there could be parks, roads, bike and walking paths and development. In areas where the ground is flat, the cap would be contoured over the freeway.

“You’re actually building the structure over the highway and then you can actually grade up and over it, so it’s kind of like a mound almost,” Stahnke said.

At Asylum Hill, where Asylum Avenue climbs up from downtown past the freeway, the cap would blend into the hill as the road is cut into it.

Support for capping is greatest in the roughly 1,000 feet between Asylum and Broad Street because it presents attractive options for connecting Asylum Hill to downtown and new transit-oriented development in that area, which also would include a new railroad station north of the highway, where the tracks also will be moved. Capping that portion would add about \$325 million to \$400 million to the project, Armstrong said.

The total base price for bringing the highway to grade, without caps, was estimated to be \$4.3 billion to \$5.3 billion about two years ago.

Capping the highway west of Broad could be done as far as the Park River conduit under the freeway, just west of the Hartford Courant. Capping that section, plus the Asylum-Broad section would add about \$600 million to \$750 million, and taking the cap about 3,000 feet from Asylum-Broad west to Sigourney would add about \$1.35 billion to \$1.65 billion in cost.

Capping costs about \$400,000 per foot, Stahnke said, or 20 percent of the cost to tunnel, at \$2 million per foot.

In a poll of the project’s public advisory committee, which includes businesses and other stakeholders, a majority thought capping between Asylum and Broad was a good

value, “as we got further to the west, that percentage came down,” Stahnke said.

But there are other ways to reduce the visual impact of the highway to the west, including using decorative sound barriers that could be bordered by linear parks.

While the capping costs are add-ons to the base budget of \$4.3 billion to \$5.3 billion, that \$1 billion range means much of the cap could fit into the budget if the project were built using accelerated construction methods that reduced the construction time and cost closer to \$4.3 billion before cap premiums.

While the ultimate design and construction method is yet to be decided, there’s no getting around the project’s impact.

“There’s going to be some amount of temporary impact and it’s a matter of the duration and the severity — and that’s why we want to have a number of scenarios evaluated and presented and discussed with the business community, with the public, so that whatever decision we make, hopefully there’s consensus that this is the best way to go,” Armstrong said.

Stahnke said people seem to be looking beyond the work to the end product.

“There’s a lot of good things happening out of this project, so I think most of the employers and businesses have really understood this and can see the final product and realize the benefits of what they’re going to see at the end, but we’re going to do everything we can to minimize this (impact) as best as possible,” he said.

Those benefits include eliminating the barrier I-84 creates today; running cross streets over the highway on attractive, pedestrian- and bike-friendly bridges; about 40 acres of new development space created for parks, buildings, bike and pedestrian paths, much of that space coming from elimination of unnecessary ramps; creation of a new boulevard along the

west edge of Bushnell Park between Asylum and Broad; a dedicated corridor for the East Coast Greenway, possibly on an elevated platform akin to New York City’s High Line linear park; and improved highway safety and flow from better ramp design.

## Patience needed

The highway, which was designed for 50,000 vehicles a day when it opened in the 1960s with a projected 50-year service life, has about 175,000 vehicles a day now and it had 1,850 motor vehicle accidents from 2009 through 2011 in the Hartford section, according to the project website, <http://www.i84hartford.com>.

While drivers will need to pack patience during construction, they have a few years before the orange cones appear.

Assuming a design is chosen by mid-2017, an environmental impact statement must be done, a process expected to spill into 2018, followed by a federal record of decision that includes a financial plan, after which the project can

move from about 30 percent design to full design, Armstrong said. It would be late 2018 or early 2019 before the project ball starts rolling.

Next, engineering and design, and acquiring properties like the Capitol View

Apartments to make way for the project would occur, which would take another two to three years, pushing the construction start date to 2021, 2022 or 2023.

“Then, is it several years or is it two years of construction?” Armstrong said. “We don’t know at this point.”

A conventional construction project could take four to seven years, potentially pushing completion toward 2030, but it’s unknown yet whether the community would choose the slow peel of the Band-Aid or fast rip with a middle-of-next-decade finish.

For details on the I-84 viaduct replacement project, including a video of how a ground-level highway would look, effects on surrounding streets and development opportunities go to: <http://www.i84hartford.com>





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THE LIST

Largest ongoing Department of Transportation projects in Connecticut

(Ranked by estimated cost as of June 2016)

Rank	Project	Estimated cost	Contractor	Start date	Estimated completion date
1	Reconstruction of I-95/I-91 Rte. 34 interchange New Haven	\$358,870,452 (1)	<b>O&amp;G/TPC Joint Venture</b> 112 Wall St., Torrington, CT 06790 860-489-9261; www.ogind.com	Jan. 27, 2011	Nov. 30, 2016
2	Reconstruction of I-84 Waterbury	\$266,837,308 (2)	<b>I-84 Constructors J.V.</b> 130 Scott Road, Waterbury, CT 06705 203-410-5873; www.i-84waterbury.com	Jan. 5, 2015	June 27, 2020 (3)
3	Reconstruction of the Moses Wheeler Bridge, I-95 over the Housatonic River Stratford	\$203,665,639 (4)	<b>Walsh Construction Co./PCL JV II</b> 45 Shawmut Road, 3rd Floor, Canton, MA 02021 781-793-9988; www.walshgroup.com	Aug. 22, 2011	Dec. 7, 2017
4	New Haven Rail Yard facilities improvements; construction of component changeout shop New Haven	\$168,133,136	<b>O&amp;G Industries Inc.</b> 112 Wall St., Torrington, CT 06790 860-489-9261; www.ogind.com	Jan. 25, 2010	June 7, 2016 (5)
5	New Haven line catenary replacement program Various	\$79,120,599	<b>Ducci Electrical Contractors Inc.</b> 74 Scott Swamp Road, Farmington, CT 06032 860-489-9267; www.duccielectrical.com	March 27, 2014	April 20, 2017
6	Waterbury bus maintenance facility replacement Watertown	\$76,189,070	<b>O&amp;G Industries Inc.</b> 112 Wall St., Torrington, CT 06790 860-489-9261; www.ogind.com	May 4, 2015	May 22, 2017
7	Merritt Parkway (Rte. 15) safety improvements, resurfacing and bridge rehabilitation Stamford	\$63,182,529 (6)	<b>O&amp;G Industries Inc.</b> 112 Wall St., Torrington, CT 06790 860-489-9261; www.ogind.com	Aug. 15, 2013	Sept. 30, 2016 (7)
8	Station upgrades and existing station enhancement Berlin, Meriden, Wallingford	\$60,684,145 (4)	<b>Judlau Contracting Inc.</b> 26-15 Ulmer St., College Point, NY 11354 718-554-2320; www.judlau.com	Oct. 24, 2014	Nov. 5, 2016
9	Replacement of Wayside Electric Traction substations Bridgeport, Milford, Norwalk	\$50,737,839 (8)	<b>A.M. Rizzo Electrical Contractors Inc.</b> 64 Triangle St., Danbury, CT 06810 203-731-3131; rizzoelectric.com	Dec. 12, 2010	March 13, 2017 (9)
10	Rehabilitation of Rte. 8 bridges Bridgeport	\$35,258,376	<b>Manafort Bros. Inc.</b> 414 New Britain Ave., Plainville, CT 06062 860-229-4853; www.manafort.com	April 16, 2015	Sept. 19, 2016 (3)
11	Atlantic Street bridge replacement phase one Stamford	\$33,881,217	<b>Yonkers Contracting Co. Inc.</b> 969 Midland Ave., Yonkers, NY 10704 914-965-1500; yonkerscontractingco.com	Feb. 8, 2016	June 25, 2018
12	Rocky Hill repair facility Rocky Hill	\$31,896,620	<b>Rizzo Corp.</b> 64 Triangle St., Danbury, CT 06810 203-731-3131; rizzocorporation.com	May 14, 2015	May 27, 2017
13	New Haven Rail Yard maintenance of Way Building New Haven	\$31,686,773	<b>Newfield Construction Inc.</b> 225 Newfield Ave., Hartford, CT 06106 860-953-1477; newfieldconstruction.com	Aug. 17, 2015	Nov. 23, 2016
14	I-95 resurfacing and safety improvements Old Lyme	\$24,615,736	<b>Tilcon Connecticut Inc.</b> 642 Black Rock Ave., New Britain, CT 06050 860-224-6010; www.tilconct.com	Feb. 16, 2015	June 17, 2017
15	New Haven Rail Yard central distribution warehouse New Haven	\$22,869,804	<b>Rizzo Corp.</b> 64 Triangle St., Danbury, CT 06810 203-731-3131; rizzocorporation.com	Nov. 14, 2014	Jan. 30, 2017 (10)
16	Rehabilitation of bridges at I-84 and Rte. 2 interchanges East Hartford	\$22,184,794	<b>The Brunali Construction Co.</b> 109 Summer St., Southington, CT 06489 860-628-5587; www.brunalliconstruction.com	May 26, 2015	Nov. 30, 2016
17	I-95 Harbor Crossing improvements New Haven	\$16,995,539	<b>R.E.D. Technologies LLC</b> 10 Northwood Drive, Bloomfield, CT 06002 860-218-2428; redtechllc.com	Feb. 1, 2014	Feb. 4, 2017
18	Reconstruction of Flatbush Ave. Connector Hartford	\$15,758,301	<b>Manafort Bros. Inc.</b> 414 New Britain Ave., Plainville, CT 06062 860-229-4853; www.manafort.com	Aug. 5, 2013	June 28, 2016

Source: State Department of Transportation, Office of Fiscal/Special Projects.  
(1) Estimated cost reduced by \$3.77 million since June 2015.  
(2) Estimated cost increased by \$4.9 million since June 2015.  
(3) Estimated completion date moved back two months since June 2015.  
(4) Estimated cost increased by \$1.37 million since June 2015.  
(5) Estimated completion date moved back seven months since June 2015.  
(6) Estimated cost increased by \$4 million since June 2015.  
(7) Estimated completion date moved back one year since June 2015.  
(8) Estimated cost increased by \$9.3 million since June 2015.  
(9) Estimated completion date moved back by 14 months since June 2015.  
(10) Estimated completion date moved back eight months since June 2015.  
—Compiled by Stephanie R. Meagher.

► Did we miss you?

We want to publish the most complete and accurate lists possible. To correct an error or submit information, contact Stephanie Meagher, research director, at (508) 755-8004, ext. 262 or smeagher@nebusinessmedia.com.



## Q&A

# Construction focuses on making CT greener, more efficient

Q&A talks about the construction industry's focus on energy efficiency and other trends with David Bobrowski, the new director of business development for Erland Construction.

**Q:** You recently joined Erland Construction to be the new director of business development for its Connecticut office. In the announcement it was said you want to make the state a greener and better place to live. What did you mean by that?

A: I have always had a passion for helping people find more energy-efficient ways to live their lives. Research has shown that people are happier and healthier when they work or live in environments that have quality air and comfortable lighting. Connecticut supports this idea by collaborating with the utility companies, like Eversource, to provide incentives for people to upgrade their living and working spaces, and these programs support improvements that use less energy and yield less waste — all good in making our state a greener, better place to live.

I want to make sure that residents and businesses are educated about what is available for them.

**Q:** What are some of the things that the construction industry as a whole can do to make the state greener?

A: Construction firms like Erland have sophisticated recycling programs to encourage material re-use and limit pure disposal. When Erland is involved with a renovation project, we encourage our clients to perform a more detailed evaluation of existing systems, looking for ways to upgrade the performance of what's already there for increased efficiency rather than simply replacing systems with new — a way to reduce waste.

**Q:** You're seen as an expert in construction efficiency. What are some of the steps you've taken over the last three decades to make construction more efficient? What's a common mistake made in the industry?

A: Sometimes developers or building owners fail to fully consider the benefits of high-performance systems. These almost always cost more at the outset, but because they use less energy and last longer, they can be a better value over time. Landscaping can also be a place where resources are used more efficiently by choosing plantings that are indigenous and require less water or chemicals to stay looking great. More frequently we see gravel or crushed stone lining planting beds, eliminating the need to add mulch every spring.

**Q:** How is Connecticut perceived as a

market for construction? Obviously there might be some cutbacks going forward from the public sector because of tough budget times. Is the private sector lucrative enough or will we see downsizing of construction firms in the near future?



**DAVID BOBROWSKI**

New director of business development, Erland Construction

A: I see great opportunities in Connecticut. We might read about companies leaving our state, but there are many more that are growing and thriving. Existing buildings are being repositioned — renovated and retrofitted — for a new lease on life as the home for new tenants. These repositioning projects often yield more energy efficiency, which is good for everyone. As Erland knows from first-hand experience, subcontractors in all trades are quite busy, which is a leading indicator of the health of the construction industry.

**Q:** What's coming next for the construction market both in Connecticut and regionally?

What's going to be a strong source of revenue for construction firms like yours?

A: Erland continues to be busy in the multifamily residential market, meeting the demand for rental housing. Looking forward,

► Research has shown that people are happier and healthier when they work or live in environments that have quality air and comfortable lighting.

I think healthcare-related facilities will be areas of growth, especially those that help keep people out of the hospital. These include medical office buildings, urgent care walk-in clinics, and free-standing MRI/ultrasound centers. People are increasingly conscious of staying

fit and healthy and the increasing activity in mergers and acquisitions of healthcare systems generate opportunities to construct or renovate for new users.

**Q:** Your expertise is business development but how is talent development? Are there enough people going into construction as a trade to meet demand? Or is there a glut of people seeking work?

A: A shortage of skilled talent is the most critical impediment for the construction industry. Many people left the industry in the slowdown of 2008 and 2009 and they have not been replaced.

We are fortunate to have many training alternatives available to help meet this challenge, from college programs with construction management majors to trade or vocational school offerings in specialty areas. Some of the trade organizations that we support such as the CT Associated Builders and Contractors also offer excellent training programs and encourage people to seek careers in the construction industry.

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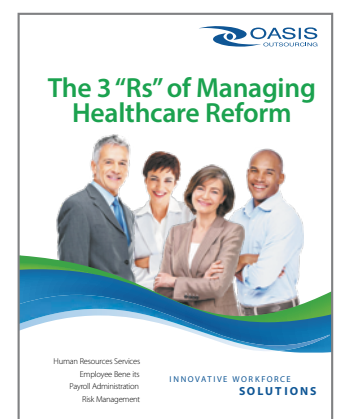
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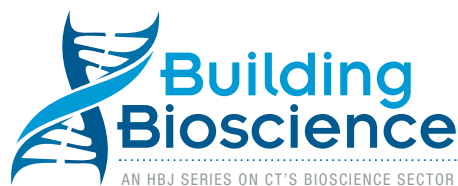


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▶ from page 1

# Melinta eyes 2017 FDA approval for bacterial infections antibiotic



By John Stearns

jstearns@HartfordBusiness.com

About this time next year, Melinta Therapeutics hopes to celebrate federal approval of its first antibiotic for treating bacterial infections — paving the way for new remedies aimed at defeating deadly drug-resistant bacteria.

With hoped-for approval of Baxdela by the Food and Drug Administration in mid-2017, Melinta could begin marketing and selling the antibiotic targeted at serious skin infections, including the nasty MRSA (methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*), which has made many drugs obsolete. There are 3 million serious skin infections each year in the U.S. that warrant hospitalization, and a large percentage are due to MRSA, creating a significant potential customer base for Melinta.

The New Haven company also believes Baxdela, which is the trade name for delafloxacin in a class of drugs called quinolones, will work on other ailments, including pneumonia and urinary tract infections.

"It will be an important day for Melinta," said company CEO Eugene Sun, referring to the anticipated FDA approval next year. "It's an important day for any company when they start to generate revenue, so we're looking forward to that."

Melinta, which also has an office outside Chicago, isn't a one-drug wonder, either. The company, whose mission is to develop and market new antibiotics, is also developing Radezolid, to treat skin conditions, with an initial focus on bacterial acne.

Perhaps most noteworthy, Melinta has another program, ESKAPE, that is still preclinical, but the company is hopeful it will move to human clinical trials next year. Each letter in ESKAPE stands for bacteria with multi-drug resistance features, "so most classes of antibiotics no longer work against the worst of the worst of every one of those pathogens," Sun said.

Melinta is working on one antibiotic, in a completely new class of drugs, to treat all six superbugs or bacteria in ESKAPE, which cause various ailments ranging from pneumonia and urinary-tract infection to intra-abdominal and blood-stream infections.

The company's work is important since many older antibiotics have become obsolete against bacteria, which are constantly finding new ways to adapt and survive, Sun said, adding that people also have taken antibiotics for granted.

"It's important to remember that less than 100 years ago there were no antibiotics and the most common causes of death or serious illness were things that are easily treatable now, so antibiotics are probably one of the greatest triumphs of science in the last 100 years," he said. "But like many good things, people just sort of assume that they've always been there."



Melinta's R&D team in New Haven includes: (from left) Ashoke Bhattacharjee, director of medicinal chemistry; Zoltan Kanyo, director of structure-based drug design; Andrea Marra, director of pharmacology and microbiology; Joe Ippolito, research director; and Erin Duffy, chief scientific officer.

That, along with the fact that bacteria are a moving target morphing and mutating to survive, raises "the concern that we're going back to that, what people call pre-antibiotic era, which was a scary time," Sun said. "So we think we have an important mission."

## The early days

Melinta was founded in 2000 as Rib-X Pharmaceuticals, which reflects the company's focus on ribosomes as its primary target for new antibiotics and "the engine room of all cells," said Erin Duffy, chief scientific officer, who joined the company in 2002 and evolved into her current role heading the New Haven research team.

The company can better target ribosomes using X-ray crystallography, a technique to help show how the bacterial ribosome looks with antibiotics bound to it and where the antibiotics bind to the ribosome, a process that inhibits bacteria function. Melinta scientists discovered how to map the ribosome using the X-ray crystallography technique.

The company was renamed Melinta in 2013 after a new round of investment, installment of a largely new management team and to reflect the company's shift towards a more commercial enterprise, Duffy said.

Melinta now has about 50 employees, 35 of those in the scientific offices of the 300 George St. incubator building that also houses other bioscience companies in New Haven. The balance of employees, mostly business-related staff, including Sun, work in Lincolnshire, Ill.

Melinta's platform of drugs excites Sean

Murphy, who retired as vice president of business development for pharmaceutical company Abbott Laboratories in 2010 and went on to cofound Malin Corp. PLC, a Dublin-based company with offices in New Haven and the U.K. that invests in life sciences companies. Malin invested \$45 million in Melinta last year, making it the second-largest investor, behind New York-based Vatera Healthcare Partners. The company has raised several hundred million dollars since its inception.

"They're clearly pioneers in coming up with agents that treat a very, very broad range of targeted bacteria," said Murphy, a non-executive director on Melinta's board who works out of the Chicago area. "And it's something... companies that are in the antibiotic business have always pursued — kind of the silver bullet of an antibiotic, going after multiple different types of organisms with one drug. If they can accomplish it, it will change medicine."

Melinta is moving aggressively in a field that many in big pharma exited, in part because of the financial return on antibiotics, according to Duffy.

"Antibiotics are the cheapest life-saving drugs," she said, adding that people take them for 10 to 14 days and they're cured. "And so if you think about the kind of money you can make from that versus, for instance, a cardiovascular drug or a lifestyle drug, where you're taking it chronically, I think for a lot of companies the math didn't add up."

That, in part, explains the long time frame from Rib-X's birth in 2000 to today, Duffy said of companies exiting the field.

At the same time, changes at the FDA previously made the regulatory path to antibiotic development more challenging, she said.

That improved with the 2012 GAIN Act (Generate Antibiotics Incentives Now), which was a response to the sharp drop in new antibiotic approvals from 2000, she said. The act provided a period of exclusivity for a drug if it met certain criteria for attacking superbugs and also provided a fast track for review with the FDA.

Follow-up legislation is being sought to help accelerate pathways for drugs that meet the highest unmet medical needs, she said.

Regulatory challenges are among myriad challenges companies like Melinta face, Sun said. They also include economic, financial and scientific challenges, but that's the story for all companies in the industry, he said.

"And the only reason that you stick with it is because those few times when you're successful, it's enormously rewarding," he said.

## Abbott connection

Abbott was one of those companies that got out of antibiotics in the late-1990s or early 2000s, thinking antibiotics had basically peaked, Murphy said. In fact, Melinta now has the rights to delafloxacin, which Abbott was developing at the time, he said.

Murphy's familiarity with delafloxacin from Abbott and the fact that Sun had also worked at Abbott, gave him and Malin more comfort in investing in Melinta. But it's more than that one drug, he said.

"We would have not invested in just delafloxacin," Murphy said. "Pharmaceuticals are





Visitors to Melinta's New Haven office can peek inside its labs (above), but only from outside the glass. A poster (left) inside Melinta's office shares the purpose for its main drug.

Duffy, whom Froshauer recruited.

The small group raised money through friends and family to help found the company, after which there have been various successful money raises.

Two more recent fundings included a \$70 million equity investment in 2014, led by Vatera Healthcare Partners, and a \$67 million equity financing announced last year and led by

Malin, according to Melinta's website.

Melinta has the team and quality of science to succeed, Froshauer said.

"I think what is amazing ... is the depth of their portfolio, that they have several waves of molecules coming down the pike and they are carefully guiding them to particular markets where they will be differentiated," she said.

Stan Choy, former CFO of Kolltan Pharmaceuticals Inc. in New Haven, which started in the same building as Melinta and where Choy got to know its principals, credits Melinta's team for its perseverance over the last 16 years and is confident in its potential.

"I always say the product is not in the market until it's selling in the market," Choy said, refusing to take anything for granted with clinical trials, the FDA, etc. "But in terms of the direction of Melinta, it looks like they're going to make it, which is a very, very good thing for them and for the state of Connecticut."

CURE hopes to see companies like Melinta, once they launch their drugs in the marketplace, stay in-state and grow, said Choy, a cancer researcher and now co-chairman and treasurer of CURE and self-described serial bioscience entrepreneur.

"It's where your roots are and hopefully it pays off because at the end of the day you want companies to launch and become bigger, greater companies to sustain and maintain jobs in the state," Choy said. "That's our objective, to get these companies up and running and funded well. Obviously the science has to be compelling, it's got to make sense, but we want these companies to stay" and create critical mass in the life sciences. ■

# Duffy's roots stretch to Melinta's founding



Erin Duffy, chief scientific officer, Melinta Therapeutics Inc.

By John Stearns

jstearns@HartfordBusiness.com

Erin Duffy joined Melinta Therapeutics Inc. shortly after its founding, evolving into her current role as chief scientific officer as the company itself evolved from aspiring startup to the cusp of its first antibiotic approval and a pipeline that includes a new class of antibiotics targeting bacterial superbugs.

"We were very fortunate to recruit her very, very early on," said Susan Froshauer, president and CEO of CURE, a nonprofit that works to support and build Connecticut's bioscience sector, who was founding CEO of Melinta's predecessor company, Rib-X Pharmaceuticals Inc., until 2010. "She's gone on to become quite a leader and quite an advocate for all of the great science we do in our company."

Duffy, 47, oversees the research team at Melinta's New Haven office, where she's worked since Jan. 2002. The office has about 35 people.

She has led Melinta's ESKAPE Pathogen Program from its infancy — each letter in ESKAPE representing a drug-resistant superbug — working to develop one antibiotic that can kill all. Melinta's website calls the program its most advanced preclinical initiative. She also contributes to other medication development.

Melinta hopes to begin human trials for ESKAPE antibiotics next year.

"When we are successful — not if, but when — that's going to be a big deal," Duffy said.

To have a hand in developing such important drugs is exciting, said Duffy, but one of the things she's most proud of, to be part of and have a hand in creating it, is her research team.

"The team that we assembled here to do the research is just this unbelievably talented and dedicated group of people," Duffy said. "... It's really the heart of this group that is just to me probably the reason I get out of bed and come here every day."

Duffy was recruited by Froshauer after first meeting her at Pfizer in Groton, where

each worked in the 1990s. Duffy began her career there as a senior research scientist

Then, in 2000, a Yale grad school friend told her about a new company starting up, Achillion Pharmaceuticals Inc., which needed somebody with her skills in computational chemistry and drug design. She joined Achillion in Dec. 2000 as associate director of innovative discovery technologies, working in the same 300 George St. building where Melinta is located, and remembers the building as a shell of what it is today.

"I remember thinking, 'Oh, what am I doing?'" Duffy said, recalling the scientifically rich character of Groton that she left.

But the work proved exciting and fun. About three months into it, Froshauer called to recruit her and also tap the chemistry expertise of Duffy's husband, William Jorgensen, a Yale professor and one of three scientific co-founders, along with Yale professors Peter Moore and Thomas Steitz, who won the Nobel Prize in chemistry. Duffy, though, remained at Achillion for about nine more months to build a team before joining Rib-X.

"That was sort of how it all happened," she said.

She became chief scientific officer in 2011.

She received her Ph.D. in physical organic chemistry from Yale in 1994 and was a Howard Hughes postdoctoral fellow. She received a bachelor's degree in chemistry in 1990 from Wheeling Jesuit University in Wheeling, W. Va., where she grew up. Her mother was a nurse and father worked for the gas company.

"I think I always liked math and science," Duffy said, adding that her mother wanted her to consider medical school, but that wasn't the direction Duffy desired.

With a small graduating class of about 120 at Wheeling and few science majors, Duffy received a lot of instructional attention. Her chemistry professor saw her talent and encouraged her to consider graduate school and apply for a summer fellowship, which she landed at Northwestern University, in chemistry.

"It was a lot of fun to work in the lab and that's what I decided that's what I wanted to do," said Duffy, who went on to Yale for graduate school and where she met her future husband, Jorgensen.

Sean Murphy, who retired as vice president of business development for pharmaceutical company Abbott Laboratories in 2010 and went on to cofound Malin Corp. PLC, a Dublin-based company with offices in New Haven and the U.K. that invests in life sciences companies and has \$45 million invested in Melinta, called Duffy a "brilliant scientist ... a true pioneer in the field."

Murphy, a non-executive director on Melinta's board, said Duffy is a team-builder and excellent communicator, able to simplify complex science as she recently did for a group of Malin lawyers, and business and financial people in a half-day presentation.

"They came back totally energized ... and the thing that shocked most of them was that Erin was able to communicate in such down-to-earth, very easy to understand (ways) some very, very sophisticated science," he said. "So it's rare. I've been around scientists for a number of years at Abbott and after Abbott and it's hard to get that combination of a person that's deep in the science that has a very warm and enchanting personality, but able to communicate." ■





Slowing sales receipts among McDonald's, Starbucks and other national restaurant brands are fueling industry worries.

## Why restaurant recession fears are on the rise

By Matt Egan

CNNMoney

Americans eat out when they're feeling good about things. That's why a recent slowdown in restaurant sales is alarming some.

In the past few weeks, McDonald's, Taco Bell owner Yum! Brands and Starbucks have all described a new wave of caution that has crept up among customers, keeping them from splurging on meals out.

The precise cause of the shift is not clear, with some blaming rising prices and slowing job growth, and others suggesting security fears or even the 2016 election are playing a role.

No matter the catalyst, the deceleration is pronounced enough for Stifel Nicolaus to warn of a looming "restaurant recession" that may represent a "harbinger" to a widespread U.S. recession in 2017.

"Restaurant industry sales tend to be the 'canary that lays the recessionary egg,'" Stifel analyst Paul Westra wrote in a research report published last week.

The gloom-and-doom stands in stark contrast with the consensus among Wall Street economists, who see low chances of an imminent U.S. recession.

But Westra went even further, warning that such a U.S. recession could be the "worst ever" for restaurants because it would come just as they grapple with rising labor costs. He urged investors to sell Panera and Olive Garden owner Darden Restaurants, and warned that Chipotle could lose half its value.

Even if they end up being too bearish, as some believe, it is clear that the restaurant industry is grappling with a slowdown.

Here are the possible drivers:

**Prices are rising:** McDonald's executives believe at least some Americans are choosing to stay at home because grocery store prices haven't risen as fast as restaurant menu prices.

Prices have gone up because restaurant owners have been forced to give workers a long overdue pay raise due to minimum-wage hikes from local governments and tougher competition for talent. Connecticut's minimum wage increased from \$9.15 an hour to \$9.60 this year, and will rise to \$10.10 Jan. 1, 2017.

Of course, the flipside is that the same people should now have more cash to spend on eating out.

**Job growth peaking:** Americans have

lately become cautious about how they spend their money.

Despite low unemployment and rising wages, Buffalo Wild Wings CEO Sally Smith told analysts in a conference call last week that people are "very reluctant to spend a lot of discretionary dollars."

That's why Hedgeye restaurant analyst Howard Penney thinks there's some truth to the restaurant recession worries. "People are cutting back because they feel insecure. The first thing that goes is restaurant spending," he said.

**Too many restaurants:** The restaurant industry recently emerged from a big IPO wave that gave newer brands like Shake Shack, Zoe's Kitchen and El Pollo Loco the ammo to expand.

But are all those new stores really needed? Rapid development may be exceeding demand, and eating into the traffic at existing restaurants, which are the ones that Wall Street focuses on.

**Terrorism:** Howard Schultz, whose Starbucks coffee giant operates over 24,000 stores, is known to have his finger on the pulse of consumers.

That's why it was interesting to hear the Starbucks CEO recently explain that race-fueled "domestic civil unrest" and "terror" incidents have "created a level of anxiety" among consumers.

The security excuse may sound just like that — an excuse — but some analysts think it makes sense.

"I would take his word for it. Are there concerns about congregating in public places? Definitely," said Matthew Difrisco, an analyst at Guggenheim Partners.

However, Difrisco noted that these security fears tend to only have a "very short-lived" impact on sales.

While Penney said he can't tie a "direct correlation" between terrorism and restaurant sales, he does think it's playing a role. "It works into the social conscience of people," he said.

**Political jitters:** McDonald's CEO Steve Easterbrook listed "elections" and "global events" as potential drivers of consumer caution. Schultz also cited a "very uncertain election."

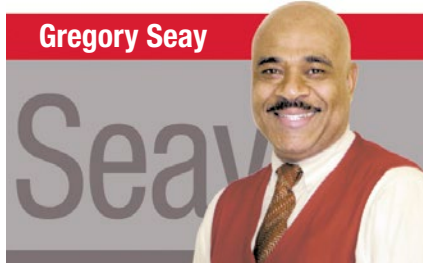
But are Americans really looking at the polls before deciding whether to buy a Big Mac? (If so, that's great news for polling sites like RealClearPolitics.com.)

"I don't give that a lot of validity," said Difrisco. "Political discourse has been dysfunctional for more than just the past year." ■

### DEAL WATCH

# 111 Founders Plaza leases to 97% full

Gregory Seay



111 Founders Plaza, East Hartford.

A series of recent lease signings/renewals at East Hartford's 111 Founders Plaza has pushed that office tower to near full occupancy, brokers say.

According to Goman+York Property Advisors, the building's leasing broker, seven office leases covering 31,200 square feet were signed to push occupancy to more than 97 percent:

- Engineering firm Quest Global Services expanded by 8,000 square feet and now occupies more than 28,000 square feet.
  - Workplace-injury Law firm McGann Bartlett & Brown renewed its lease on 8,300 square feet.
  - Connecticut Association of Realtors has renewed its lease on 4,700 square feet.
  - Professional staffer KForce signed for 3,200 square feet.
  - Tax-accountant Case, Corrado, Yazmer & Co. leased 3,200 square feet.
  - Staffing firm CoWorx leased 2,000 square feet.
  - Wealth manager Financial Vision leased 1,800 square feet.
- Merchant99-111 Founders LLC is landlord.

#### Windsor retail center in \$3.36M refi

A Windsor retail property recently underwent a \$3.36 million mortgage refinancing, its owners say.

Built in 1989, the property is a single-story, 34,084-square-foot building on 6.69 acres at 555 Day Hill Road.

555 Day Hill LLC has owned the property for more than 20 years.

Educational Playcare Ltd. is the anchor tenant, the landlord said.

Rhode Island's Washington Trust was the financing institution.

#### \$900K E. Hfd. sale

The 40,200-square-foot industrial building on Prestige Park Road in East Hartford recently sold for \$900,000, brokers say.

166 Prestige Park Road LLC bought the building on 1.84 acres at 166 Prestige Park Road.

55 Pent Highway Associates LLC was the seller.

Sentry Commercial represented the seller; CBRE-New England represented the buyer in this transaction.

#### Bob's Chalet sites sold



805-809 King St., Bristol.

The pair of Bristol buildings that have been home to Bob's Sports Chalet for more than 35 years were sold recently for \$420,000, brokers say.

Both storefronts and four residential apartments are at 805 & 809 King St.

Robert and Estelle Abrams sold the properties to BillBel LLC.

Bob's Sports Chalet, a ski shop and sports apparel store, will continue operating both stores at their location.

Advance Realty CT LLC was sole broker in the sale.

#### Bristol foreclosure sale



116 Riverside Ave., Bristol.

The 6,196-square-foot Bristol commercial building at 116 Riverside Ave. was recently sold for \$215,000, brokers say.

Desmarais Properties LLC acquired the property from United Bank Commercial Properties Inc.

The purchaser's Desmarais Property Maintenance LLC affiliate, a property-servicer specializing in snow removal, will occupy the building, according to sole broker Advance Realty CT LLC. ■

*Deal Watch wants to hear from you. E-mail it, along with contact information to: gseay@HartfordBusiness.com. Gregory Seay is the Hartford Business Journal News Editor.*





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## MOVERS & SHAKERS



John W. Kukulka



Nancy Meyer



Lori Rodden



Kathleen Brady



Michelle Ciotola



Beth Taylor



Nina Lapinski



Justin Hopkins

### Neighborhood Housing Services of New Britain names executive director

**John W. Kukulka** has been appointed executive director of Neighborhood Housing Services of New Britain after most recently serving as interim executive director.

Kukulka has nearly completed building four homes on Beaver Street in New Britain, the organization's first new construction in several years, and recently obtained a Housing Tax Credit Contribution Program commitment from the state of Connecticut for \$361,349 to close the funding gap for this project.

Kukulka has developed affordable housing projects in Connecticut and California.

### Susan G. Komen Southern New England adds area residents to board

Susan G. Komen Southern New England has added several new members to its board of directors, including **Nancy Meyer** of Hartford and **Lori Rodden** of Glastonbury, both breast cancer survivors.

Meyer is a media consultant for the newspaper industry focusing on audience diversification and digital transformation. Prior to returning to Connecticut, she was publisher and CEO for Orlando Sentinel Media, which publishes the Orlando Sentinel. Before that, she was publisher of the Hartford Courant Media Group.

Rodden is vice president of human resources for The Hartford Financial Services Group Inc. Rodden supports the property and casualty and group benefits businesses, as well as claims and actuarial.

### South Windsor chamber announces executive director

The South Windsor Chamber of Commerce has named **Kathleen Brady** as its new executive director.

Brady is a community relations manager, having worked at Cigna for more than 22 years in the civic-affairs department and the Cigna Foundation. Brady's career includes working as an underwriter for The Hartford.

### Pullman & Comley adds counsel in labor, benefits department

Pullman & Comley announced the addition of **Melinda B. Kaufmann** to the firm as counsel in the labor, employment law and employee-benefits department in Hartford. Kaufmann practices in education law, and labor and employment. She advises boards of education on all aspects of their operations and represents boards of education before state and federal courts and agencies.

### Cantor Colburn elects partner

Cantor Colburn LLP has elected **Michelle Ciotola** to partner. Ciotola also will become the firm's trademark and copyright department vice chair.

Ciotola concentrates her practice on counseling, protecting and enforcing trademark, trade dress, copyright and related intellectual property rights, as well as counseling clients in unfair competition, Internet, advertising and promotions law.

### Quisenberry Arcari Architects names marketing director

Farmington-based Quisenberry Arcari Architects recently announced the addition of **Beth Taylor** as the firm's new director of marketing.

Taylor has 15 years of marketing and communications experience in print and digital communications, public relations, technical writing, event planning, branding and market research for professional service firms, having held marketing positions at BVH Integrated Services, JCJ Architecture and KBE Building Corp.

### Tecton Architects expands leadership team

Hartford-based Tecton Architects has announced the promotion of **Nina Lapinski** to associate principal and **Justin Hopkins** to associate.

Lapinski is an interior designer and project manager, supporting Tecton's high-profile corporate clients for more than five years. She leads Tecton U, the firm's in-house training program, with a focus on staff coordination, team organization and long-term client partnerships.

Hopkins, since joining Tecton in 2013, has worked closely with firm leadership to expand the presence of Tecton's Rhode Island studio, leveraging his independent school and higher-education experience.

Lapinski and Hopkins are now part of a broader leadership team made up of four principals, six associate principals and four associates.

### National health underwriters board includes VP from Southington

The National Association of Health Underwriters (NAHU) recently installed its 2016-17 board of trustees, including **Paul Smith** of Paul E. Smith Insurance LLC, a full service health and life insurance agency in Southington, as Region I vice president.

### Avid Marketing Group adds five to team

Avid Marketing Group, a marketing and sales promotion firm in Rocky Hill, has hired five new employees: **Lindsey Fries**, **Josh Olsen**, **Emily Tracey**, **Kelly Lindell** and **Michael DeMato**.

Fries joins as an assistant account coordinator.

Olsen joins from Mindshare in New York City. He will provide creative solutions to maximize client marketing spends and partnerships.

Tracey is a senior analyst. Previously, she worked as a research analyst for LIMRA in Windsor and focused on research in the financial services industry.

Lindell is a new project manager who comes from Whole Foods Market, where she developed shopper marketing initiatives in the Northeast division.

DeMato has joined as vice president of client services and will oversee shopper marketing planning and strategy. He was formerly vice president, group account director at Match Marketing Group.

## NONPROFIT NOTEBOOK

### NONPROFIT PROFILE

## New England Air Museum

36 Perimeter Road, Windsor Locks | [www.neam.org](http://www.neam.org)

#### MISSION

To present the story of aviation and the human genius that made it possible.

#### TOP EXECUTIVE

**Jerry P. Roberts**, Executive Director

#### SERVICES

Aviation exhibits and educational programs.

#### FY 2014 SUMMARY

	2013	2014
Total Employees	28	29
Total Assets	\$5,580,470	\$5,319,091
Total Liabilities	\$26,844	\$48,974

#### REVENUES

Contributions & Grants	\$1,449,416	\$775,265
Program Service Revenue	\$526,521	\$693,678
Investment Income	\$33,345	\$84,060
Other	\$104,255	\$119,578
TOTAL	\$2,113,537	\$1,672,581

#### EXPENSES

Grants	\$0	\$0
Member Benefits	\$0	\$0
Salaries/Employee Benefits	\$791,777	\$790,390
Fundraising Fees	\$0	\$0
Other	\$783,848	\$1,122,644
TOTAL	\$1,575,625	\$1,913,034
MARGIN	\$537,912	\$(240,453)

#### TOP PAID EXECUTIVES (FY 2014)

	Base Salary	Total Compensation & Benefits
<b>Michael Speciale</b> , Executive Director	\$232,510	\$252,630

SOURCE: GUIDESTAR IRS 990 TAX FORM

PHOTO | CONTRIBUTED



**The Wilson-Gray YMCA Youth & Family Center** received a **\$3,500** grant from the **Million Dollar Round Table Foundation** to support its Y Achievers Program.

Y Achievers fosters academic success and career development for youth in grades five through 12. Pictured (from left) are: Gary Wolff, president of GTW Financial Services; and Clinton Hamilton, executive director of the Wilson-Gray YMCA Youth & Family Center

Middletown's **Wesleyan University** said it recently wrapped its most successful fundraising campaign ever, a multi-year effort that netted **\$482 million**.

That surpassed the private school's original goal of \$400 million, officially set in 2013. President Michael Roth reported in March of that year that the university had already raised \$283 million towards its goal. Its largest single year was fiscal year 2016, when it raised \$79 million in gifts and pledges.

Officials said the biggest portion of

the haul was \$274 million from the "This Is Why" campaign, to be used for student financial aid, including the creation of 152 new endowed scholarships. The funds will also help recruit and retain faculty.

More than 34,000 donors gave to the campaign, with 80 percent of alumni donating, according to Wesleyan. The school said Wesleyan parents donated \$51 million.

The campaign included multiple events featuring big-name alums and parents like Mad Men creator Matthew Weiner, Seinfeld and Veep star Julia Louis-Dreyfus, and the creators of the Broadway musical "Hamilton," Lin-Manuel Miranda and Thomas Kail.

**Connecticut Humanities** will provide more than **\$175,500** in major grants to support 10 nonprofit organizations. Grants will support the Connecticut Dance Alliance, Goodwin College, the Butler-McCook House & Garden and New Britain's Klingberg Family Centers. Funding for these grants is provided by money allocated to Connecticut Humanities in the 2015-16 state budget.

The **Hartford Foundation for Public Giving** has given a **\$36,000** grant to **The Urban League**. The grant will be used towards the publication of "The 2016 State of Black Hartford," a comprehensive book on the history of African and Caribbean-Americans in Hartford.

The **First Niagara Foundation** has donated **\$10,000** to Hartford's new **Youth Service Corps**, an organization that provides unemployed young people, ages 16 to 24, with part-time employment completing community service projects.



On September 8th, join us in recognizing these outstanding professionals!



Honoring Chief Financial Officers for their outstanding performance and commitment.

RESERVE YOUR SEATS TODAY!

### 2016 CFO of the Year Finalists:

**David Bittner**  
Trinity Health - New England, Inc.

**Joseph Consorte**  
Connecticut Community Care, Inc.

**Sandra Cruz- Serrano**  
CREC

**Mark Daley**  
Materials Innovation and Recycling Authority

**Linda Discepolo**  
South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority

**Amy Dunnells**  
Visual Perceptions

**Cecilia Faraci**  
Revolution Properties

**Joseph Geremia**  
Capital Region Development Authority

**Tammy Maguire**  
BlumShapiro

**David Marchak**  
Turbine Technologies Inc.

**Miriam Mercado**  
Pequenin CMRA

**David Mudano**  
Orthopedic Associates of Hartford PC

**Sheldon Paul**  
Proton Onsite

**Wanda Schulman**  
The Watkinson School

**Michael Shea**  
Connecticut Airport Authority

**Richard Sudol**  
Simsbury Bank

**Robert Trojanowski**  
Community Foundation of Greater New Britain

**Ronald Wuennemann**  
Supreme Industries Inc.

**John Zinzarella**  
The Metropolitan District (MDC)

### Awards Luncheon

Thursday, September 8, 2016

11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Location: Farmington Gardens

999 Farmington Avenue, Farmington

Single Ticket Rate: \$85

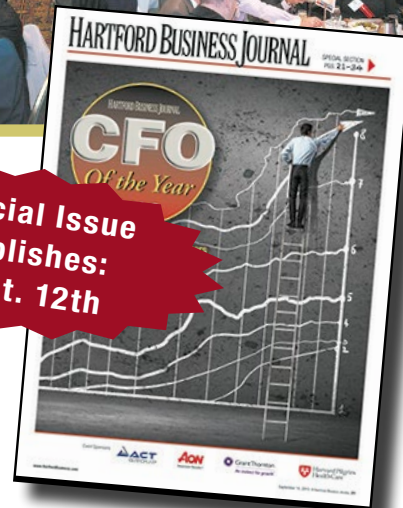
Table of Ten Rate: \$800

(Single Tickets: \$95 & Table of Ten: \$900 AFTER September 1st)

Or Contact Amy Orsini at 860.236.9998 ext. 134 or email aorsini@HartfordBusiness.com for more information.



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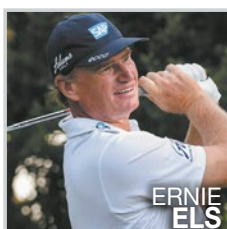
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TOWN PROFILE

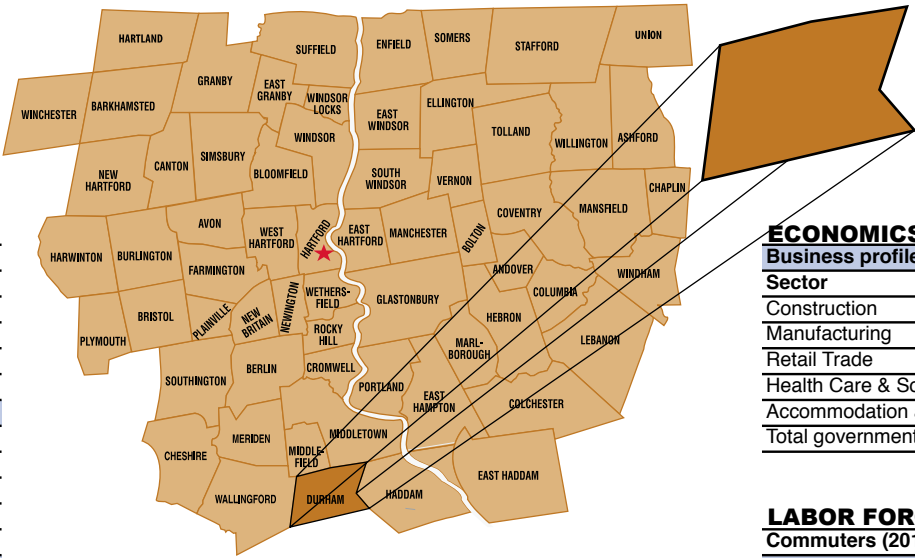
Land area (sq. miles)	24
Pop./sq. mile (2010)	312
Median age (2010-14)	44
Households (2010-14)	2,582
Median HH Inc. (2010-14)	\$117,328

Population (2010-14)	
2000	6,627
2010	7,388
2014	7,371
2020	7,803

Race/Ethnicity (2010-14)	
White	6,789
Black	18
Asian Pacific	145
Native American	0
Other/Multi-race	212
Hispanic	235

HOUSING	
Housing stock (2010-14)	
Existing units (total)	2,674
% single unit	90.0%
New permits auth. (2014)	3
as % existing units	0.10%
Demolitions (2014)	2
Residential sales (2013)	77
Median price	\$358,200

Top 5 Employers	
Coginchaug Regional High School	
New Haven Raccoon Hunters Club	
Hobson Motzer Inc.	
Morgan Am&T	
Durham Manufacturing Co.	



DURHAM

Town Hall: 30 Town House Road,  
Durham, CT 06422  
(860) 349-3452

ECONOMICS

Business profile (2014)		
Sector	Units	Employment
Construction	34	265
Manufacturing	17	535
Retail Trade	13	76
Health Care & Social Assistance	14	167
Accommodation and Food Services	11	152
Total government	10	312

LABOR FORCE

Commuters (2014)		
Commuters into town from:		
Durham	315	New Britain 81
Meriden	228	Wallingford 79
Middletown	210	Bristol 57
Middlefield	111	

Labor Force (Residence)	
Employed	4,084
Unemployed	204
Unemployment Rate	4.8%

Place of Work (2014)	
# of units	187
Total Employment	2,145
Manufacturing Employment	535

TOP 5 GRAND LIST

Company	Amount	% of Net
Connecticut Light and Power Inc.	\$17.5M	2.30%
Durham Mfg.	\$6.1M	0.83%
Hobson & Motzer Inc.	\$4.3M	0.58%
Stonegate Springs LLC	\$3.5M	0.47%
MCM Investment Properties	\$2.9M	0.39%

Educational attainment (2010-14)

Persons age 25 or older	Town %	State %
High school graduate	1,149 23%	28%
Associate's Degree	277 5%	7%
Bachelor's or more	2,578 51%	37%

GOVERNMENT

Government form	Selectman-Town Meeting
Total revenue (2014)	\$29,334,002
Per capita tax (2014)	\$3,278
as % of state average	121.5%
Total expenditures (2014)	\$28,522,849
Total indebtedness (2014)	\$7,378,735
as % of expenditures	25.9%
per capita	\$1,004
as % of state average	43.3%
Annual debt service (2014)	\$0
as % of expenditures	0.0%
Equalized net grand list (2014)	\$1,008,830,953
per capita	\$137,293
as % of state average	95%

Source: Connecticut Economic Resource Center, www.cerc.com

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EDITORIAL

# Employers must have key voice in I-84 viaduct redo

**T**he planned remake of the I-84 viaduct poses many risks and rewards for the city of Hartford as well as the region as whole, and while all stakeholders should have a say in the process, the business community must be top of mind to urban and transportation planners as well as government officials.

As HBJ staff writer John Stearns reports in this week's issue, the multi-billion dollar reconstruction of the I-84 stretch through Hartford, which could start as early as 2021, will cause pain for motorists and businesses, but how much and for how long is still uncertain.

We urge transportation officials to choose the path least disruptive to the business community, which will have the most at stake during a construction process estimated to take at least four to seven years.

The Capital City remains Connecticut's epicenter of commerce and Hartford employers' ability to get their workers and goods in and out of the city safely and in a timely manner will be a key consideration for whether or not they choose to do business here.

A major concern, as voiced by MetroHartford Alliance CEO Oz Griebel along with many others, is that the massive headaches likely to be caused by the construction process will deter companies from moving to or expanding in Hartford. This, along with other issues the city is facing including its budget crisis and high property taxes, could have major implications on the Hartford economy's short- and long-term prospects.

For years, Hartford employers — particularly larger corporate citizens — have been shrinking their office footprint as they consolidate their workforce and allow for more flexible work-at-home schedules. The reconstruction of the I-84 viaduct only threatens to hasten or continue that trend.

Another concern, of course, is how the state chooses to finance the project. Although a decision hasn't yet been made on the design of the highway, it will cost billions no matter which plan is selected. The state's precarious financial position means transportation funding will be under constant threat, and state officials have already said tax surcharges and tolls, among other options, could be adopted to help pay for the project.

Significantly increasing the cost of companies and their employees to work in Hartford would add another roadblock to growing the city's economy.

While we urge caution, it does appear state transportation officials are taking seriously the concerns of businesses and other stakeholders. The state Department of Transportation and its project consultants have held myriad public meetings and gatherings to get input on the project design and implementation.

Griebel told HBJ the process has been "extremely well-managed and highly participatory," so far, but, of course, the devil will be in the final plan details.

It's too early to talk specifics about construction since there's no decision yet on the new design, although there's apparent consensus on a combination of ground-level and "capped" freeway, which is less costly than other options, including building a tunnel.

State transportation officials are also considering several construction methods, including an accelerated approach that would cause more short-term disruption, but significantly shorten the construction timeframe, possibly cutting the completion timeline in half. The business community must have a significant say on these types of ideas and decisions.

And of course, we recognize the potential positive impacts the I-84 viaduct reconstruction could have on Hartford, including improving traffic flows and re-connecting portions of the city long separated by the highway, which could open up economic development opportunities.

We just urge caution and continued collaboration as officials get closer to making final decisions. ■

RULE OF LAW

# State's nonprofit-contracting system broken

By John Horak

**A**nyone looking for proof that we need governmental reform will find plenty in an op-ed published June 17th by the CT Mirror, entitled "Georgie Porgie and the Connecticut Budget Cuts."

The editorial (penned by an active member of Our Families Can't Wait, SEIU 1199) is both a lamentation about the effect of budget cuts on Department of Developmental Services (DDS) employees who care for people with intellectual disabilities, and a condemnation of DDS's immediate efforts to hire (by contract) nonprofits to provide the care in question (because they can do so less expensively).



John Horak

While the DDS's efforts have a taxpayer-friendly common sense appeal, they are palliative at best because the "contract system" by which the state engages nonprofits to provide services must be rebuilt from scratch if we want an affordable and fully functional system.

Let's start with some perspective on cost and size. DDS has an annual budget of almost \$1 billion and over 3,000 employees — which are deployed to provide services to the intellectually disabled. Approximately 16,000 people are receiving services, and there is a long waiting list. The people served are of various ages, have different levels of need, and have diverse and complex medical and behavioral conditions. This is hard work — it is labor intensive, hands-on, 24/7, stressful, emotional and heavily regulated.

Second, over the decades DDS has fulfilled its responsibilities by providing care by both direct and indirect means. Direct care is provided at DDS facilities with DDS employees at state wage levels. Indirect care is provided under contracts (which are long and complex pre-printed documents) with nonprofit organizations that provide care at their facilities with their employees at their much lower wage levels. The wage differential accounts for the cost savings DDS needs, and the gap is huge. The CT Mirror op-ed claims that nonprofit workers make "close to half" of what state workers make, a figure consistent with my research.

Third — and here's the thing — DDS is able to save money by transferring work to nonprofit providers simply because it has manipulated and underfunded the contract-based nonprofit provider system for years. DDS's recent moves are not (despite any contrary appearance) a free market-based decision to find lower-cost providers in lean times — because under the contract system (as it exists) DDS has more control over the nonprofits (and thereby what they can pay their employees) than it does over its own staff.

In other words, in the current financial crisis

the state is turning to a lower-cost alternative of its own making — nothing more, nothing less.

There is a legal loophole that gives the DDS leverage to treat the nonprofits (and their employees) this way. While labor law permits state employees to bargain on a collective basis for wages, benefits and security, anti-trust law prohibits the nonprofits from bargaining collectively as an industry for reasonable sector-wide contracts.

Nonprofit employees can unionize (and many have) but their employers remain in a "take it or leave it" position with the source of almost all of their revenue (from the state). Even worse, the terms of the contracts relegate nonprofits to a form of indentured servitude (they may be the most one-sided documents in legal history), in contrast to the legal protections in the collective-bargaining contracts with state employees.

So, here's the bottom line: We seem to have a system in which DDS employees make "too much" and nonprofit employees make "too little" even though they do the same work and are both paid with taxpayer dollars. This is the way the state has made the bed for everyone, leaving us with an unfortunate, unnecessary and unseemly tug-of-war between state employees and their nonprofit counterparts, as the CT Mirror op-ed demonstrates.

We can do better.

My experience tells me that the best way to get there is with a system with internal checks and balances that would include a reformed contracting system that gives nonprofits the ability to bargain in good faith and to bind the state to payment and other terms for the long-term benefit of the people served and employed. This would require legislation, leadership and creativity (such as "grandfather" provisions to protect higher-paid employees in the interim).

I have served on nonprofit boards and represented others as counsel. I respect the efforts of DDS employees to advocate for their interests, and I am sure they provide high-quality care to the disabled people they serve. But in this anomaly-laden situation of DDS's making a truce with their nonprofit counterparts (if not an alliance) is called for, and in a spirit of comity and with the hope of finding common ground, let me correct some misunderstandings in the Georgie Porgie op-ed.

The nonprofits are not in this to make a profit at the expense of their employees or anyone else. "Nonprofit" means what it says, and the law prevents them from having any owners or shareholders, and any black ink in their financial statements must be used to perpetuate their tax-exempt mission. The inability to pay employees a living wage hangs over nonprofit management and governing boards as a constant worry. Finally, despite the lower wages, nonprofit quality of care has not and does not suffer, and any innuendo to the contrary is not helpful to the cause or mission. ■

*John M. Horak has practiced law at Reid and Riege P.C. in Hartford since 1980. His opinions are his own.*

## HARTFORDBUSINESS.COM POLL

Will the pending I-84 viaduct project do more harm or good for Hartford?

- ☐ Harm
- ☐ Good

To vote, go online to [HartfordBusiness.com](http://HartfordBusiness.com).

### Last week's poll results:

Was the Department of Justice right to sue to stop the proposed insurance mergers?

63.3% Yes

36.7% No



## Send Us Your Letters

The Hartford Business Journal welcomes letters to the editor and guest commentaries for our opinion pages. Electronic submissions are preferred and welcome at: [editor@HartfordBusiness.com](mailto:editor@HartfordBusiness.com).



## TALKING POINTS

# 3 assumptions that get in the way of good PR

By Jason Simms

Since editorial coverage and advertisements appear next to each other in print, online and on the airwaves, public relations is often thought of as akin to advertising. But PR is more similar to branding. Your brand is the story you tell about yourself. PR is the story told about you.

Press coverage is a partnership between your organization and a media outlet to serve their audience. This mindset is the key to good PR, but it's easy to get off track. Avoiding these common assumptions can help your organization reach a wider audience and drive engagement via the press.



Jason Simms

**Assumption:** The press release should summarize our story.

**Reality:** You need to offer a personal invitation to a story.

Companies often wonder why their press releases fail to generate coverage. Journalists receive hundreds of emails a day. A press

release is likely to be ignored unless the headline tells a story.

Consider a hypothetical example: "Company X releases new safer chainsaw" vs. "Man injured by chainsaw builds safer one." Which would you be more likely to open? The content could be exactly the same, but the broader, blander headline hides what makes the story stand out.

An eye-opening stat or striking photo can also help a journalist grasp the story you're proposing quickly. If you have an asset like this, make sure it's mentioned early in your email.

Press releases have a role — they come up in search results and some journalists like to work from them — but the one-size-fits-all model is flawed. The New York Times has a very different readership and mission than a regional business journal. A personalized pitch introducing or linking to your press release is more likely to produce results.

**Assumption:** Start with the message you want to put out.

**Reality:** This isn't all about you. It's a partnership.

PR campaigns often begin with a meeting in which someone asks the question, "What is the message we want to put out?" A better question to be asking is, "What need does the press have that we can fill?"

► **PR is more similar to branding. Your brand is the story you tell about yourself. PR is the story told about you.**

Read, watch or listen to the outlet you want to be in and imagine what headline you could give them. Get down to the essence of the outlet. Why does it exist? What does it do for its audience? How can you help?

The answer may be completely different from the rest of your marketing and it may be very specific. Once you find the overlap between what you do and what the media outlet does, you can contact the outlet in their language and demonstrate familiarity. By illustrating how your company can contribute to the outlet, you open the door to a story that will include broader information about what your company does. But you can't start there. You have to start with the common ground.

**Assumption:** Press coverage will produce immediate business.

**Reality:** The greatest value of press coverage is realized over time.

Media coverage provides value to an organization both in short-term promotion

— reaching the audience of the outlet upon publication — and by conferring lasting credibility. Except in extreme cases, such as appearing on Ellen or BuzzFeed, the short-term promotion value of press coverage can be fairly limited. This is primarily because the press doesn't exist to promote, it exists to inform.

It is precisely this objective nature that gives press coverage the powerful ability to inspire enduring trust. A media outlet, which exists purely to serve its readers, has validated that what you do is important. That means a lot to potential customers researching you, even years later. It's up to you, however, to take full advantage of it. When integrated with your website, social media, email marketing, printed materials, etc., press coverage permanently changes how your company is viewed by those who matter to you. ■

*Jason Simms is a public relations strategist. His firm, Simms PR, is based in Deep River.*

## BIZ BOOKS

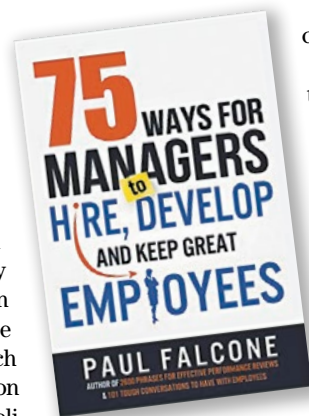
# Tips for hiring, managing and keeping great employees

**"75 Ways for Managers to Hire, Develop and Keep Great Employees"** by Paul Falcone (AMACOM, \$21.95).

Recent studies show the cost of employee turnover ranges from \$6,000 for entry-level employees to upwards of \$50,000 for mid-level managers. Why so high? The time taken to hire and train a new employee takes many people away from their regular tasks and routines. Falcone offers a template for reducing turnover and increasing productivity. Here are two of the 75 that deal with crucial elements of the hiring process:

1. "Establishing your brand." The greater your brand recognition, the more likely candidates will see you as an "employer of choice." While businesses routinely search social media for information on applicants, they forget that applicants will search social media and the firm's website for information. Your social media presence pre-sells candidates. Poorly-organized and outdated information sends the wrong message. Make your online information mobile-friendly because smartphones and tablets offer ready-access information.

When you've selected interview candidates, email them a recruitment brochure. It should contain information about the firm's history and goals, the hiring process and benefits. Your current employees figure in the process, too; posting videos of them discussing their jobs on your website's career page or YouTube help candidates understand how the



Jim Pawlak

company does business.

11. "Effective onboarding to maximize the chances of initial success and create true believers." Your sales process doesn't end upon acceptance of an offer. On the new hire's first day, she/he doesn't know anybody, doesn't know departmental functions and protocol and job priorities.

Assign an onboarding mentor (i.e. a top performer) from the new hire's department to show them the ins and outs of why, what and how. This go-to person also provides a new hire with "people" information — the roles of the players, their personalities and penchants.

The manager should meet with the newbie 30, 60 and 90 days after hire to complete the process. These meetings aren't performance appraisals. They're about finding out how the person has acclimated. Falcone provides a number of "acclimation" questions.

Great quote: "What you want for yourself, give to another."

...

**"The Execution Shortcut: Why Some**

► **The greater your brand recognition, the more likely candidates will see you as an employer of choice.**

**Strategies Take the Hidden Path to Success and Others Never Reach the Finish Line"** by Jeroen De Flander (The Performance Factory, \$19.95).

The path to success hides within the people charged with execution. Human behavior, when not synched with the "Big Choice," trumps the best plans.

De Flander uses a "Head, Heart and Hands" process to connect human dynamics to execution. **Head** — Noted strategy guru Henry Mintzberg sees strategy as "a pattern in a stream of decisions." Daily choices must align with the "Big Choice."

When management provides conflicting (and often competing) messages, strategy fails. Example: A manager tells a call-center rep "Your performance is based upon customer satisfaction ratings and call volume." How can the rep effectively solve customers' problems when told that call volume must increase?

**Heart** — People have to relate (i.e. buy in) to the "Big Choice." This involves getting them to see the

importance of their roles in execution. When you want to drive home a point, use stories not charts and graphs. Stories talk about what must be done — and why? They energize actions.

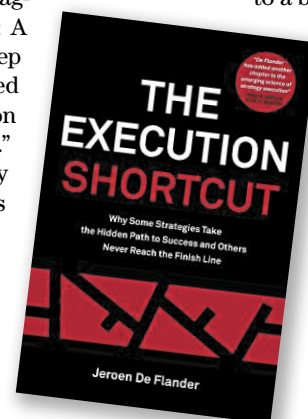
And since the devil is in the details, seek "big commitments on small things." Their daily choices help or hinder execution. Celebrate small victories to keep their batteries charged.

**Hands** — "Complexity is the CO2 of the modern business world." Consider "CO2mplexity" as the silent killer of execution. It's sneaky, too. Remember the story of the frog in cold water that was slowly brought to a boil? The frog doesn't recognize

peril until it's too late. In business, it kills ideas and energy. Look at the long-term impact of new layers of decision-making and procedures before implementation.

The bottom line: When you leave those affected out of plan construction, you're taking the path to failure. ■

*Jim Pawlak is a nationally syndicated book reviewer.*







## OF NOTE

### TRINITY COLLEGE PRESIDENT HONORED AT STATE NAACP EDUCATION SUMMIT

Trinity College President Joanne Berger-Sweeney received the Mary White Ovington—Ella Baker Lifetime Achievement Award from the Connecticut State Conference of NAACP Branches.

The award was presented during the organization's biannual Education Summit at Trinity's Mather Hall. Pictured (from left) are: Joan Gibson, CT NAACP; Berger-Sweeney, Trinity president; and Benjamin Foster Jr., CT NAACP.

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Robert C. Hughes

Corliss Montesi

Drew Figdor

### UConn SCHOOL OF BUSINESS INDUCTS THREE ALUMNI INTO HALL OF FAME

The UConn School of Business honored three of its top alumni by inducting them into the school's hall of fame during a ceremony at the Hartford Marriott Downtown. The 2016 inductees include: Robert C. Hughes of Marlborough; Corliss Montesi of Wallingford; and Drew Figdor of New York City.

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### CTFASTRAK PROJECT WINS ENGINEERING AWARD

The American Council of Engineering Companies of Massachusetts has named Michael Baker International Inc. as a winner of their 2016 Bronze Engineering Excellence Award for work on the CTfastrak, Connecticut's first bus rapid-transit system. Michael Baker International, with world headquarters in Pittsburgh, was retained by the Connecticut Department of Transportation to serve as program manager for the CTfastrak project.

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### IT DIRECT RANKS AMONG TOP MANAGED SERVICE PROVIDERS

West Hartford's IT Direct recently ranked among the world's most progressive 501 Managed Service Providers, according to Penton Technology's ninth-annual MSP 501 list and study. The top MSP 501 companies ranked this year include organizations from around the world and from diverse technology and business backgrounds.

**Please Note:** All electronic submissions for Accolades should be sent to [news@HartfordBusiness.com](mailto:news@HartfordBusiness.com). For more information about the Hartford Business Journal's Accolades Page, please visit [www.HartfordBusiness.com](http://www.HartfordBusiness.com).

### SIKORSKY DONATES TO ACT SPOONER HOUSE



▶ Stratford helicopter maker Sikorsky recently conducted food drives, which collected 1,346 food items, to benefit Spooner House, a food shelter in Shelton. Online donations from employees and their families totaled \$10,368, while other internal fundraisers brought in \$5,941. The goal of the initiative was to provide non-perishable food items and raise funds to aid local veterans and families using the Valley Food Bank and homeless shelter at Spooner House.

### ANNABELLA'S ANGELS DONATES BLANKETS TO BRISTOL HOSPITAL



▶ The Waterbury-based charity Annabella's Angels recently donated handmade blankets to Bristol Hospital's Families are First Maternity Unit. The blankets were made by Thomaston resident Barbara Wisavsky. Pictured (from left) are: Patricia Coppola, Bristol Hospital; Terri Faragher, Families are First; Jessica Ocasio, Annabella's Angels; Jill Lombardi, Families are First; and Chris Ann Meaney, Bristol Hospital.

### ALL WASTE DONATES BASEBALL TICKETS TO LOCAL NONPROFIT



▶ Brian Hedstrom and Russ Lallier of Hartford-based All Waste Inc., recently stopped by Community Mental Health Associates' headquarters to donate New Britain Bees tickets to Director of Community Programs Karolina Wytrykowska. The tickets will benefit for CMHA's Team Time Social Club, which provides group activities and independent socialization for CMHA clients. Pictured (from left) are: Hedstrom, Lallier and Wytrykowska.



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